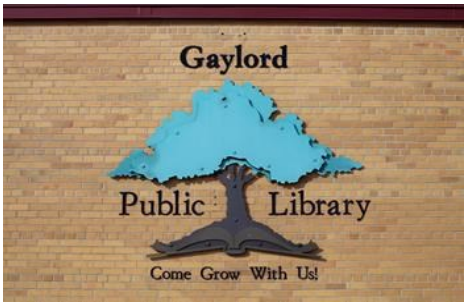
2016 Gaylord Community Engagement Task Force Report



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GAYLORD

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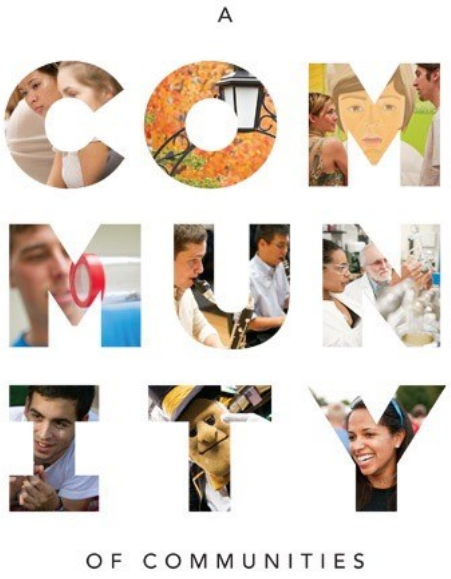

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Introduction

"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."
Henry Ford

Henry Ford might be talking about a factory, but I think this fits Gaylord right now. The City of Gaylord has been working well together over the last year and a half. In February 2015, city staff and City Council members came together to set the big picture goals for the city by developing the first mission, vision, values, and goals for the City. One of these goals involved increasing citizen participation in the affairs of the City. The group kept together to make progress by conducting a citizen survey in 2015. Then beginning this spring, the mayor, staff, and citizens formed a task force to look at citizen engagement. We came together to form a successful and relevant plan to help guide the City's citizen engagement efforts into the future. I am happy to say that this isn't some dry document to sit on a shelf, but a living, malleable document that should be used to guide citizen engagement on a daily basis and be reviewed as outlined in the document or as citizen and council demands dictate.

I am proud that we came together to be a part of a great initiative toward creating more citizen engagement for our community, which in turn will strengthen our community. The task force has done great work by discussing various components of community engagement, the challenges the community is facing, and the possibilities to move us into the future all to make Gaylord a better place.

Enclosed, you will find the task force's work, outcomes, and recommendations to increase citizen engagement in the city of Gaylord. The task force deserves all the credit for coming up with very convenient recommendations for the City.

I want to personally thank all the task force members for their commitment to citizen engagement and the commitment to making Gaylord a better place. All of you are a part of something great. I would also like thank all the citizens who have a been a part of the citizen engagement process through responding to the 2015 survey, providing comments on social media, or even talking to staff or an elected official about issues. Thank you for making Gaylord a better place.

Kevin McCann
City Administrator

Members

City of Gaylord Community Engagement Task Force Members:

Don Boeder - Mayor

Kevin McCann – City Administrator

Tony Padilla– Police Chief

Diana Karau-Citizen

Ashley Messner– Citizen

Jim Swanson– Citizen

Goretti Enriggue– Local Business Owner

Ivan Martinez– City Intern

Katie Bobich– City Intern

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Mission & Vision

One of the objectives of the task force was to create a mission and vision statement for community engagement throughout the City of Gaylord. Through extensive research and input from members, the following statements were created:

Mission: *Our mission is to advance the community, and add value to the life and well-being of our citizens, through actions that produce tangible benefits.*

Vision: *The City of Gaylord, a respectable, diverse, and involved community.*

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Project History

MARCH

Throughout the first meeting team building skills were exercised. Discussion of the definition of engagement and the importance of the task force .
Also discussed future meeting dates.
8 members present.

APRIL

The task force conducted a SWOT analysis, and discussed the preparation of a strategic plan.
7 members present.

JUNE

The task force met twice in the month of June.
The first meeting was to review a variety of mission and vision statements examples.
The second meeting was to decide on both vision and mission statements.
A total of 7 members.

MAY

Assessed the SWOT analysis and focused on creating a mission and vision statement. We also began to review strategic goals.
7 members present.

SWOT Analysis

The task force developed a SWOT analysis in order to understand what Gaylord community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were.

Community Engagement Task Force SWOT Analysis

	Helpful (To Achieving the Objective)	Harmful (To achieving the Objective)
Internal Origin (Attributes of the organization)	**Major strengths** • **Interested projects (parks, trails)** • **Safe community** • **Small town feel** • **People want the best for the community, try new things.** • **Forward planning** **Additional strengths** • Diverse community • Coffee with the Mayor • Long-term staff • Variety of businesses • The pool, intermingling • Events • Updated Gaylord website • Facebook site (good tool for younger generation) • Proud community • Everyone knows each other	**Major weaknesses** • **Segregation** • **Language barrier** • **Culture** • **Not comfortable** • **Volunteer numbers (low)** • **Bring youth back to community** • **Funding** • **Fundraising events** • **Lack of a balanced age group** **Additional weaknesses** • Everyone knows each other (people don't like one another) • Loss of EDA director (Amy) • Community Center • Keeping up with infrastructure • Sh Experiences (real or perceived) • Don't have a place in it (community, council) • Shortage of adequate housing • Limited Recreational Areas
External Origin (Attributes of the environment)	**Major opportunities** • **New med school** • **New elementary school** • **New pastors** • **Elevators** **Additional opportunities** • Bring younger population • Visible presence • Collaborations with the new school • Create opportunities for outreach • Events are good opportunities • Diversity	**Threats** • **Language and cultural barriers** • **Lack of volunteers** • **High cost to make improvements** • **Med school may not come** **Additional threats** • No plan b • Michael Foods (mistreatment of employees, revolving door) • Haven't found niche • More debt • Change

Engagement Matrix

The task force also developed a matrix (below) which presented what issues were to be decided by Council only, or through various engagement avenues consisting of: Facebook/social media, mailed notice/utility bill, open house, public hearing, or other. In general the task force concurred that if the issue involved a large portion of the community, that the public should be noticed.

	Council Only	Facebook Post/ Social Media	Mailed Notice/Utility Bill	Open House	Public Hearing
Ordinances					
Parking restrictions			X		X
Fee enactments/ changes		X	X		
Amendments	X				
Permits					
Building/ general		X			
Special events permit	X				
Gambling	X				
Nuisances					
Long grass	X				
Hazardous material	X				
Junk	X				
City Projects					
Major equipment purchases		X	X		
Park/Street renovations/ Building project		X	X	X	
Historic preservation	X				
Planning & Zoning					
Community projects		X	X	X	
Grant opportunities	X	X	X	X	
Potential development		X	X	X	
Land usage	X		X		X
Any ordinance					X
Administration					
Budget	X				
Determining customer satisfaction		X	X		
Staff changes	X				
Agenda minutes		X			

Recommendations

Through much discussion the task force was able to present the following recommendations to the Council:

1. Utilization of social media in order to continue to reach out to the younger generation.
2. Conduct one or two audits of engagement a year.
3. Highlight the important aspects of the city's budget for citizens.
4. Continue to translate important information for Spanish speaking citizens.
5. Increase budget for citizen outreach and open house events.
6. Continue expanding usage of Gaylord's website.
7. Continue to print newsletters in utility bill with pertinent/relevant information.
8. Hiring a bilingual person on a part-time basis to assist with outreach to the Hispanic community in a manner that would be effective.
9. Developing a tangible partnership with Sibley East Schools, churches, and civic groups to assist with community outreach, and engage families and youth.